

UNCLAS

SUBJECT: Safety Of Use Message (SOUM) TACOM Control No. SOUM-03-001,  
Operational, Mortar, 120mm: Towed M120, NSN 1015-01-226-1672, LIN M68405 and  
Mortar, 120mm: Carrier-Mounted M121, NSN 1015-01-292-3801, LIN M68405 DTG  
041325Z.

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* URGENT \*  
\* DEATH OR SERIOUS INJURY TO SOLDIERS OR \*  
\* DAMAGE TO ARMY EQUIPMENT WILL OCCUR IF THE \*  
\* INSTRUCTIONS IN THIS MESSAGE ARE NOT IMPLEMENTED \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

1. References:

- A. SOUM TACOM Control No. SOUM-02-004, 8 Apr 2002, SAB.
- B. TM 9-1015-250-10, Operator's Manual for Mortar, 120mm: Towed M120, NSN 1015-01-226-1672, and Mortar, 120mm: Carrier-Mounted M121, NSN 1015-01-292-3801, August 1996, with changes 1 through 3.

2. Distribution: Note this is a "Safety Of Use Message". MACOM Commanders will immediately retransmit this message to all subordinate commands/activities within 24 hours of receipt of this message and acknowledge receipt of this message within five working days to Safety Office, Tank-Automotive and Armament Command-Rock Island (TACOM-RI), ATTN: AMSTA-LC-SF, Rock Island, Il 61299-7630, e-mail: amsta-lc-sf@ria.army.mil.

3. Problem Discussion:

A. Referenced TACOM SOUM-02-004 addressed malfunctions/incidents which occurred at Fort Benning on 24 Jan 2002 and a second which occurred at Fort Irwin on 29 Mar 2002. Both occurred during removal of a misfired 120mm cartridge from the 120mm mortar. First incident resulted in serious injuries to two soldiers. Second incident resulted in the deaths of three soldiers and injury to a fourth.

B. Accident investigations for the Fort Irwin incident are complete. Evidence indicates the safety mechanism of the mortar was not properly locked in the fire position. Testing confirms that firing ammunition cartridges at charge 3 with a safety mechanism not properly locked in the fire position will, repeat will, result in a misfire after seven to nine rounds. Without the safety mechanism properly locked, each cartridge fired will push the firing pin lower until firing pin height is not sufficient to initiate the cartridge primer.

C. Referenced TM was issued as a reprint with changes 1 through 3 included. This TM revised the "Before Firing" checks and misfire removal procedures. Paragraph 6, page 2-99 of referenced TM requires units to "check that firing selector is positively locked in the "F" (FIRE) position." This "Before Firing" requirement must be strictly followed.

D. Referenced TM also revised Preventative Maintenance, Checks and Services (PMCS) for the safety mechanism. PMCS item 4, page 2-16.3 of referenced TM, requires units to "check that safety mechanism positively locks under spring tension into fire and safe detents." "If the safing mechanism is not confirmed as locked in the safe switch position detent, it is not safed". A defective safety mechanism means the mortar is not fully mission capable. All units must routinely check the mortar's safety mechanism to ensure proper function.

E. We again advise all units that use 120mm mortar ammunition of the potential for injury or fatality if misfire procedures are not properly performed. All units must strictly follow the misfire procedures in chapter 2, referenced TM.

4. Parts, Assembly, or Components to be Inspected: Safety mechanism, NSN 1015-01-294-3346. All users will immediately conduct the PMCS procedures for the safety mechanism as stated above. Any and all defective safety mechanisms must be replaced.

5. Additional user actions:

A. An URGENT Modification Work Order (MWO 9-1015-250-30-2) to add warning decals to the cartridge extractor and at various locations within the tracked mortar carrier is pending. This MWO is user applied. Details concerning the MWO have been negotiated with your installation MWO coordinator.

B. MWO kits are scheduled to be shipped to all locations within the next 30 days. Units are advised to immediately contact DS maintenance and have their equipment scheduled for this MWO application.

6. Program Sponsor Actions: Publications that require change as a result of this inspection. NA.

7. Point of contacts.

A. Message Point of Contact. Mr. Joe Schmidt, AMSTA-LC-CFSM, DSN 793-3369, e-mail: schmidtj@ria.army.mil, or Mr. Jim Hayes, AMSTA-LC-CFSM, DSN 793-3229, e-mail: hayesj@ria.army.mil.

B. Safety Engineering. Mrs. Judith Windham, AMSTA-LC-SF, DSN 793-6367, e-mail windhamj2@ria.army.mil or Mr. Gavin Ziegler, AMSTA-LC-SF, DSN 793-2995, e-mail zieglerg@ria.army.mil.

#### 8. Directions For Obtaining Logistics Area Representative (LAR)

Information: To find your TACOM LAR, you must be a registered user in the Army Electronic Product Support (AEPS) database; if not, request access to AEPS at the public page <https://aeps.ria.army.mil/aepspublic.cfm>. Click on enter AEPS, security alert box will appear, click on "ok". Then a client authentication box pops up and you can click "ok" or "cancel". That will bring the enter network password box where you will enter the user name and password and click "ok". Once logged into the AEPS site, click on logistics assistance personnel locator listed under popular applications. Then select the appropriate region, i.e., CONUS, USAEUR, Far East, Kuwait. Select the location nearest you and click a name. This will give you a LAR's name, DSN, and commercial phone number, email address, and photo. If you don't have access to AEPS, you can also obtain this information by contacting the TACOM senior command representative (SCR) for your area. CONUS-East (includes all units East of the Mississippi plus Fort Polk to include National Guard and Reserve Units), DSN 236-6923, Commercial 910-396-6923. CONUS-West (includes all units West of the Mississippi except Fort Polk, to include all National Guard and Reserve Units), DSN 737-0263, Commercial 254-287-0263. FORSCOM (includes SOUTHCOM, Kuwait, CONUS units deployed and reserve units not otherwise covered) DSN 367-6204, Commercial 404-464-6204; USAREUR (Great Britain, Germany, Belgium, Luxemburg, Italy, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia) DSN 375-6128/7436, Commercial 01149 621-487-3461/6128, Far East (includes Alaska, Hawaii, Korea, Okinawa, Kwajalein, and Japan) DSN 315-722-3036/6579, Commercial 011 82 32 520-6036/6579.

UNCLAS

BT